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Accounts Southeast:

T r a n s i e n c e

Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art

February 20 - May 30, 1999

I would like to acknowledge George Adams of George Adams Gallery, New York, for his kind assistance in locating work for this exhibition; Michael and Raquel Scheck, Miami, Florida, Nair Revilla, Coral Gables, Florida, Gary Nader, Coral Gables, Florida, and Michael Juan, Coconut Grove, Florida, for lending work; and the five artists for their participation.

Funding for *Accounts Southeast: Transience* was provided in part by the Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation. SECCA is supported by The Arts Council of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County, and the North Carolina Arts Council, a state agency.

This exhibition was organized by Jeff Fleming, Chief Curator

Catalog design: Abby Goldstein Design

Editor: Sheila Schwartz

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Transience continues SECCA's Accounts Southeast series, which highlights artists of the Southeast who have made significant contributions to the art of the region and the nation. The exhibition presents the work of five of them, all born in Latin America but now living in the United States, who merge elements of their Latin heritage with images and perspectives of their adopted home: Luis Cruz Azaceta, José Bedía, the team of Eduardo Del Valle and Mirta Gómez, and Nicolás Leiva. Shifting from culture to culture, they mix diverse elements into new, transcultural postures. The resulting artworks, in a range of media, focus on the nature of cultural engagement, the power of tradition, and the use of personal signs and symbols.

Transitorio es la continuación de *Narraciones del Sureste* de SECCA, en la cual se destacan artistas del sureste que han hecho suficientes contribuciones al arte en la región y la nación. La exposición presenta el trabajo de cinco de ellos, todos nacidos en Latino America pero que ahora viven en los Estados Unidos, y quienes combinan elementos de su patrimonio Latino con imágenes y perspectivas de su tierra adoptiva. Luis Cruz Azaceta, José Bedía, la pareja Eduardo Del Valle y Mirta Gómez, y Nicolás Leiva. Variando de cultura a cultura, estos artistas combinan elementos diversos en una forma transcultural nueva. El resultado del arte, en varios medios, enfoca las tendencia de interacciones culturales, el poder de la tradición, y el uso de signos y símbolos personales.

Luis Cruz Azaceta

Born: Havana, Cuba, 1942 Lives in New Orleans, Louisiana

Luis Cruz Azaceta fled Cuba alone in 1960 at the age of eighteen. Settling in the New York City area, he worked at a variety of odd jobs and eventually attended the School of Visual Arts, where he studied under Leon Golub. His early work shows his teacher's influence as well as the influence of Latin-American folk art. Azaceta's large paintings of the 1970s and 1980s are highly confrontational, exposing the decay and violence of urban life through a confusion of vivid color and a mass of cartoonish images that surround tumultuous figures. Fear, cruelty, and the dehumanization of life characterize all these paintings. After Azaceta moved to New Orleans in 1992, the tone of his work became less confrontational. As seen here, it is pared down, composed of washes of color and line drawings, Polaroids, and found objects. Social and political concerns, however, remain paramount. Religious beliefs, journeys—particularly over water—and family are suggested through text, and in images of figures and boats. Azaceta uses his art to express a compassion for human life; it is his attempt to eradicate violence and injustice.

Luis Cruz Azaceta se fugó de Cuba solo, en 1.960. Estable ciéndose en la ciudad de Nueva York, trabajó en una variedad de empleos y finalmente asistió al "School of Visual Arts" donde estudió bajo Leon Golub. En sus primeras obras se vé la influencia de su profesor, así como la influencia del Arte Folklórico Latino Americano. Las pinturas grandes de Azaceta de los años 70 y 80 so sumamente confrontivas, revelan la decadencia y la violencia de la vida urbana por medio de una confusión de colores vivos y una multitud de imágenes caricaturadas que rodean tumultuosas figuras alborotadas. El temor, la crueldad, y la deshumanización de la vida, son características de sus pinturas. Después de que Azaceta se mudó a Nueva Orleans en 1.990, el tono de su trabajo cambió. Como se vé aquí, sus obras son menos complejas, compuestas de colores aguados y di dibujos de línea, Polaroides, y objetos hallados. Sin embargo las inquietudes sociales y políticas permanecen supremas. Las creencias religiosas, las jornadas—particularmente sobre el agua—y la familia, son insinuadas por medio de texto e imágenes de figuras y botes. Azaceta usa su arte para expresar compasión hacia la vida humana. Es un objetivo hacia la erradicación de la injusticia y la violencia.

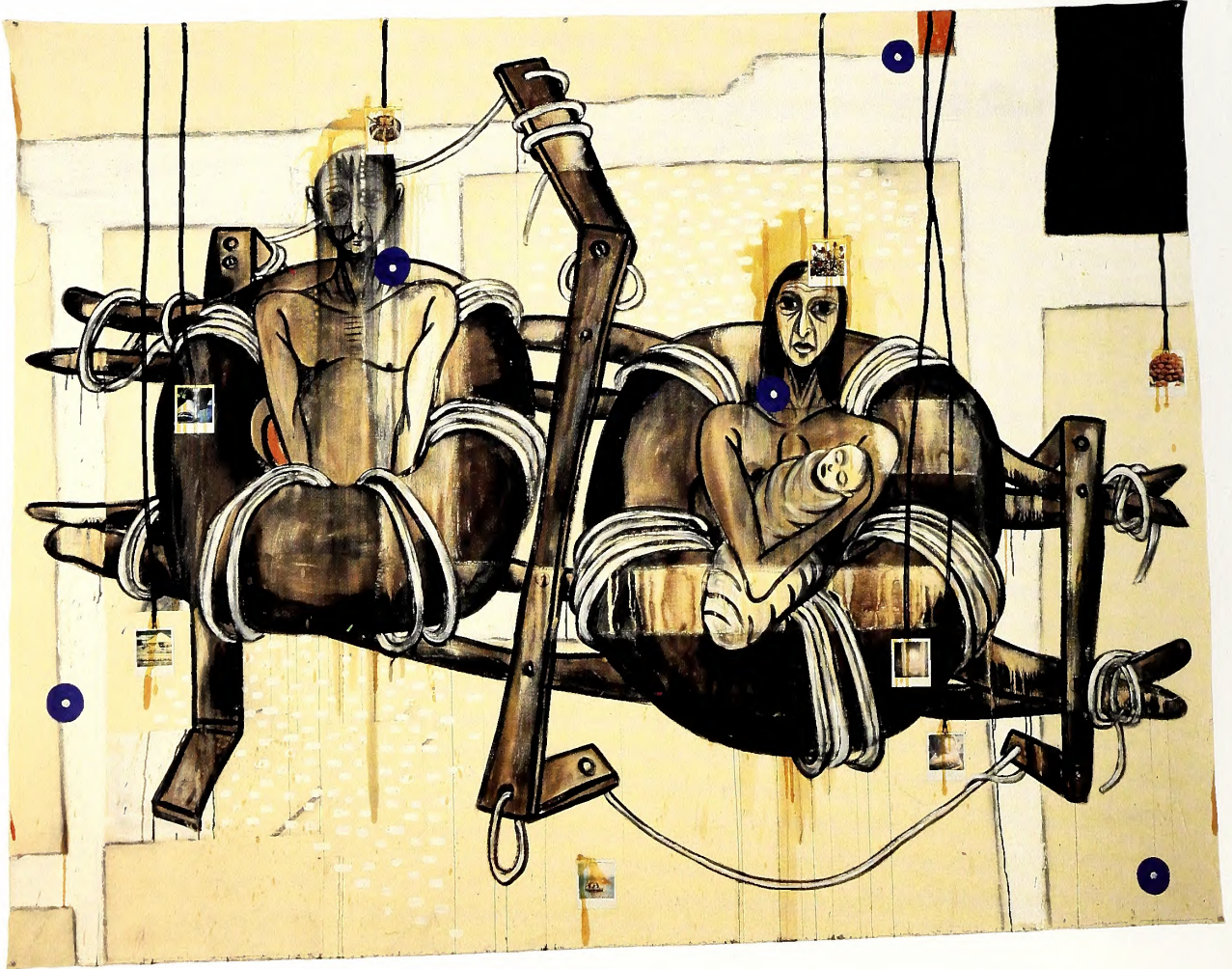
José Bedia

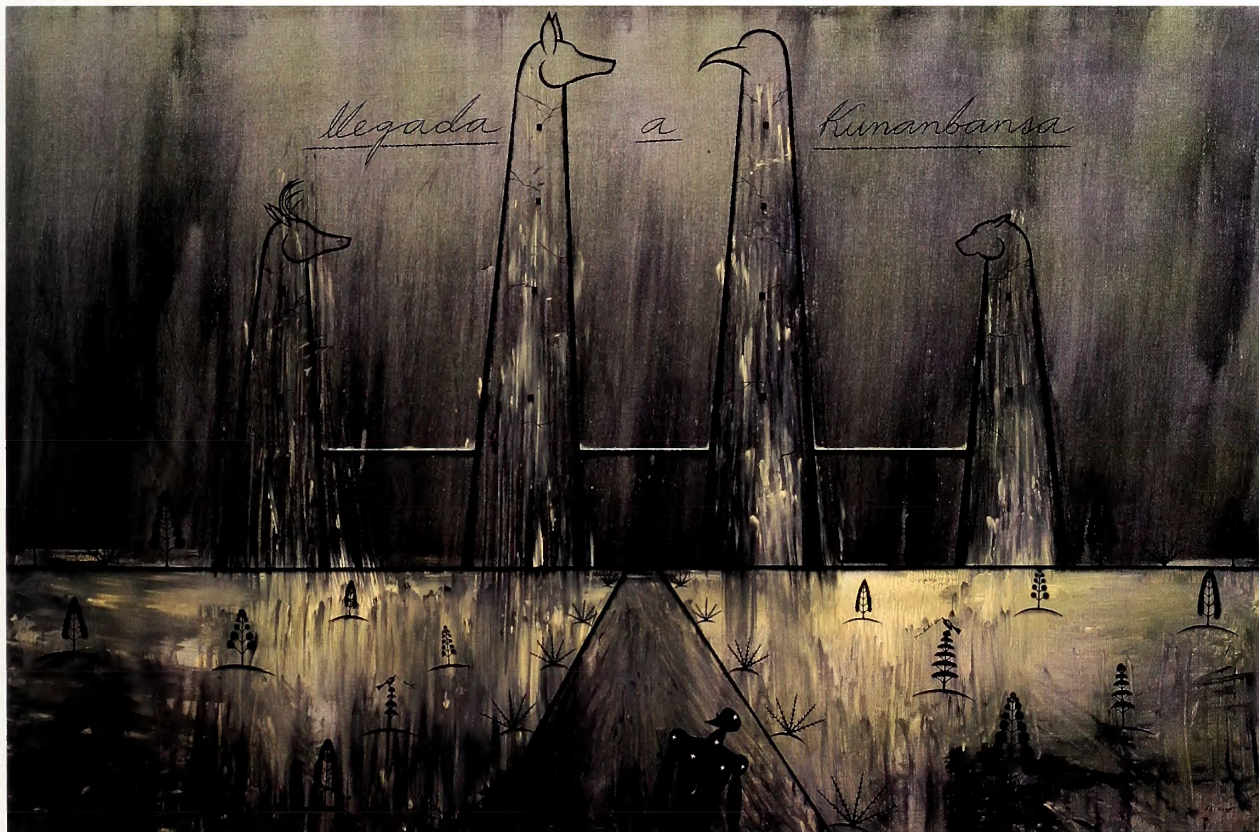
Born: Havana, Cuba, 1959 Lives in Miami, Florida

José Bedia merges a variety of cultural elements to produce art of great strength and meaning. He explores the shared concepts in such diverse belief systems as Native-American spiritualism, the mysticism of Mexican Indians, and the Palo Monte religion, a Cuban hybrid that combines elements of the religions of the African Kongo with ingredients of Western Catholicism. The parallel beliefs include a spiritual connection to nature and the universality of the individual's relationship to the earth. Bedia sees himself as a traveler, moving from place to place and from culture to culture. Although he crosses the borders of nations, he more accurately describes his journey as crossing the borders of traditions. His Cuban identity and the Palo Monte religion ground his large paintings and drawings, as he employs their symbols and rituals to create simple, charcoal line drawings of figures, often coupled with animals or boat forms. He applies paint with his hands, accentuating a non-Western approach, and adds text related to Palo Monte rituals. Bedia's goal is to incorporate elements of these belief systems and of his Cuban identity into the contemporary Western cultural vocabulary.

José Bedia combina una variedad de elementos culturales para producir un arte de gran fuerza y sentido. Explora los conceptos compartidos por sistemas de creencias tan diversas como el espiritualismo Nativo-Americano, el misticismo de los indios Mexicanos, y la religión Palo Monte. Una híbrida cubana que combina elementos de las religiones del Congo Africano con ingredientes del Catolicismo occidental. Las creencias paralelas incluyen una conexión espiritual con la naturaleza y la universalidad de la relación individual con la tierra. Bedia se vé él mismo como un viajero, mudándose de sitio a sitio y de una cultura a otra. A pesar de que el cruce es entre fronteras de naciones, él describe con más exactitud su jornada como el cruce de fronteras de tradiciones. Su identidad cubana y la religión Palo Monte son la base de sus pinturas y dibujos. Usa símbolos y ritos para crear dibujos sencillos al carbón. Estos representan personas frecuentemente en pareja con animales o figuras de botes. Aplica pintura con sus manos, acentuando una manera antigua, y agrega texto relacionado con ritos Palo Monte. El objetivo de Bedia es incorporar los elementos de estas creencias y de su identidad Cubana, con el vocabulario contemporáneo de la cultura occidental.

6 **Luis Cruz Azaceta**
La Familia/Balseros, 1994





Eduardo Del Valle

Born: Havana, Cuba, 1951

Lives in Miami, Florida

Mirta Gómez

Born: Havana, Cuba, 1953

Lives in Miami, Florida

Since 1994, Eduardo Del Valle and Mirta Gómez, a husband-and-wife team, have been creating a series of photographs depicting Mayan dwellings of the Yucatán Peninsula. The house portraits, as they call them, document the changes industrialization has wrought on the domestic architecture of the region, the scarcity of traditional building materials, and the availability of new products. The design of the one-room dwellings is centuries old—images of it appear on wall paintings in ancient palaces and temples. This venerable style, however, is quickly evolving into modern forms, and the one-room dwellings face extinction. Del Valle and Gómez, who moved from Havana to Miami in 1961, are not nostalgic about the past. Instead, they attempt to document the beauty of the indigenous architecture and the process of modernization. They equate the evolution of new forms with the changes all cultures undergo as they assimilate new perspectives.

Desde 1.994 la pareja Eduardo Del Valle y Mirta Gómez han estado creando una serie de fotografías que representan viviendas Mayas de la Península del Yucatán. Los retratos de casas, como industrialización a forjado en la arquitectura doméstica de la región, la escasez de materiales tradicionales de construcción, y la disponibilidad de productos nuevos. El diseño de la viviendas es de hace siglos. Aparecen en imagenes pintadas en las paredes de palacios y templos antiguos. Sin embargo, este estilo venerable está rapidamente desarrollándose en formas modernas, y las viviendas de un solo cuarto afrontan extinción. Del Valle y Gómez, quienes se mudaron de Havana a Miami en 1.961, no son nostálgicos del pasado. Por lo contrario, intentan documentar la belleza arquitectonica de los indígenas y el proceso de la modernización. Ellos semejan la evolución de formas nuevas con los cambios a los que todas las culturas se someten al asimilar perspectivas nuevas.

Nicolás Leiva

Born: Tucumán, Argentina, 1958

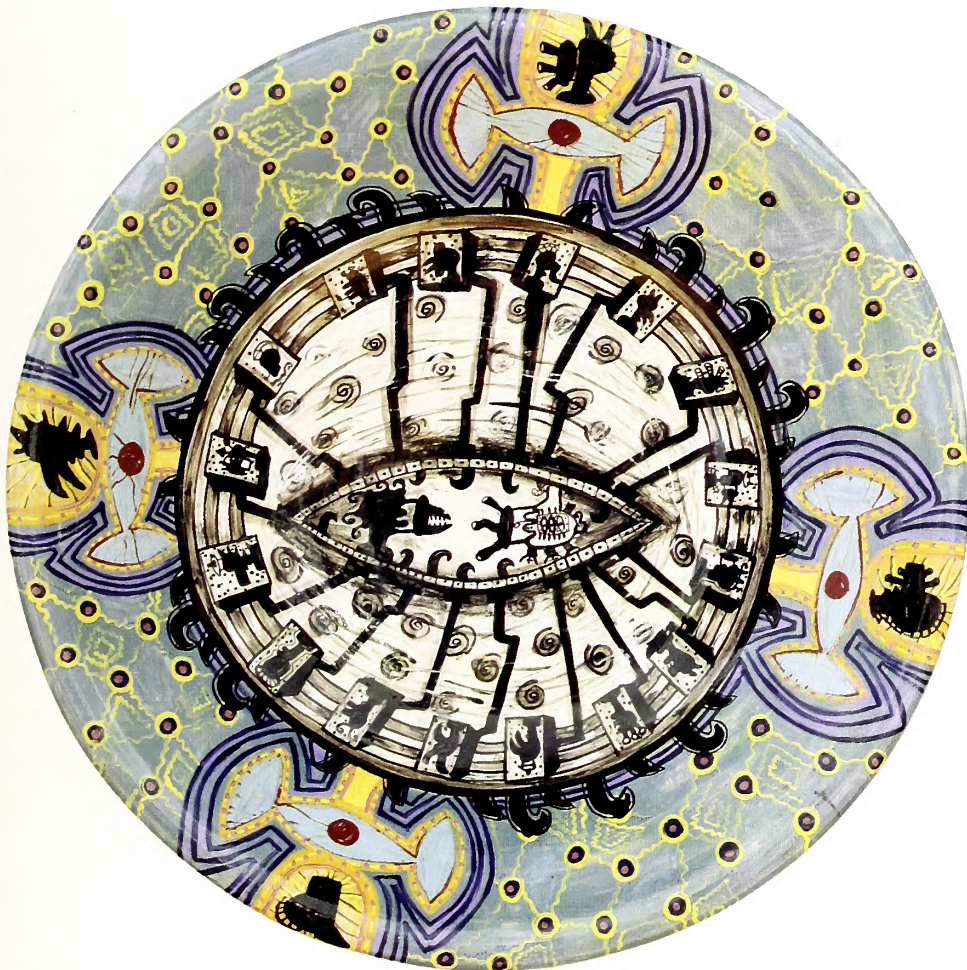
Lives in Bay Harbor, Florida

Nicolás Leiva moved from a colonial town near the Andes mountains in Argentina to Miami in 1990. A painter and sculptor, he added ceramics to his range of media after his move to the United States. The ceramic tradition of his hometown involved functional terracotta used for potting plants and for other domestic activities. But the work exhibited here is nonfunctional. For Leiva, the clay is a surface upon which to draw and paint, and in this sense is an extension of his paintings and sculptures. The drawings, in black over vivid patterns of color, are often cartoonish and gestural. They depict apocalyptic images of screaming birds, skeletal figures with daggers, and cryptic writings intertwined in thorny branches. Dense, fantastic, and vibrant, the drawings present carnivals of death and violence and carry both personal and cultural symbols, referencing family, Christian thought, and Latin-American folklore.

Nicolás Leiva se mudó de un pueblo colonial cerca de los Andes, en Argentina, a Miami en 1.990. Como pintor y escultor, añadió cerámicas a su gama de medios después de su mudanza a los Estados Unidos. La cerámica tradicional de su pueblo natal son terracotas de uso útil, usadas para matas y otras actividades domésticas. Pero el trabajo expuesto aquí no es de uso útil. Para Leiva, la arcilla es otra superficie en la cual pinta y dibuja. En este sentido es una extensión de sus pinturas y esculturas. Los dibujos, en negro sobre diseños de colores vivos, son frecuentemente caricaturados y gesticulados. Representan imágenes apocalípticas de pájaros chirriantes, figuras esqueléticas con puñales, y escrituras misteriosas entrelazadas en ramas espinosas. Densos, fantásticos y vibrantes, los dibujos de carnavales de muerte y violencia representan símbolos culturales y personales; referencias a la familia, reflexiones cristianas, y folklore Latino Americano.



Untitled, 1997



Works in the Exhibition

- 1.** Luis Cruz Azaceta
La Familia/Balseros, 1994
Acrylic, charcoal, Polaroids, and shellac on canvas
84 x 108 inches
Courtesy of the artist and George Adams Gallery, New York
- 2.** Luis Cruz Azaceta
Ark, 1994
Charcoal, acrylic, Polaroids, and shellac on canvas
110 1/2 x 119 1/2 inches
Courtesy of the artist and George Adams Gallery, New York
- 3.** Luis Cruz Azaceta
God, 1994
Acrylic and Polaroids on canvas
118 x 76 1/4 inches
Courtesy of the artist and George Adams Gallery, New York
- 4.** José Bedia
Canción del Immigrante, 1994
Acrylic on canvas
42 x 70 inches
Collection of Michael and Raquel Scheck, Miami, Florida
- 5.** José Bedia
Llegada a Kunanbansa, 1993
Acrylic on canvas
62 x 94 inches
Collection of George and Jean Adams, New York
- 6.** José Bedia
Lembo/Brazo Fuerte, 1993
Acrylic and oil stick on canvas
83 x 170 inches
Courtesy of the artist and George Adams Gallery, New York
- 7.** Eduardo Del Valle and Mirta Gómez
Hoctum Yucatán, Mexico, 1997
Chromogenic print
41 x 54 inches
Collection of the artists
- 8.** Eduardo Del Valle and Mirta Gómez
Hunucma, Yucatán, Mexico, 1996
Chromogenic print
41 x 54 inches
Collection of the artists
- 9.** Eduardo Del Valle and Mirta Gómez
Bayil, Yucatán, Mexico, 1996
Chromogenic print
41 x 54 inches
Collection of the artists
- 10.** Eduardo Del Valle and Mirta Gómez
Kambul, Yucatán, Mexico, 1995
Chromogenic print
41 x 54 inches
Collection of the artists
- 11.** Eduardo Del Valle and Mirta Gómez
Labna, Yucatán, Mexico, 1994
Chromogenic print
41 x 54 inches
Collection of the artists
- 12.** Eduardo Del Valle and Mirta Gómez
Sac-Chich, Yucatán, Mexico, 1994
Chromogenic print
41 x 54 inches
Collection of the artists
- 13.** Nicolás Leiva
Untitled, 1999
Ceramic
8 x 10 inches
Collection of the artist
- 14.** Nicolás Leiva
Untitled, 1998
Ceramic
4 x 20 1/2 inches
Collection of Michael Juan, Coconut Grove, Florida
- 15.** Nicolás Leiva
Untitled, 1998
Ceramic
4 x 20 1/2 inches
Collection of Nair Revilla, Coral Gables, Florida
- 16.** Nicolás Leiva
Cuatro Jimetes: La Peste, 1998
Ceramic
4 x 20 1/2 inches
Collection of the artist
- 17.** Nicolás Leiva
Cuatro Jimetes: La Muerte, 1998
Ceramic
4 x 20 1/2 inches
Collection of the artist
- 18.** Nicolás Leiva
Cuatro Jimetes: La Guerra, 1998
Ceramic
4 x 20 1/2 inches
Collection of the artist
- 19.** Nicolás Leiva
Cuatro Jimetes: El Hambre, 1998
Ceramic
4 x 20 1/2 inches
Collection of the artist
- 20.** Nicolás Leiva
Untitled, 1997
Ceramic
3 x 16 3/4 inches
Collection of Gary Nader, Coral Gables, Florida
- 21.** Nicolás Leiva
Untitled, 1997
Ceramic
4 x 20 1/2 inches
Collection of Gary Nader, Coral Gables, Florida
- 22.** Nicolás Leiva
Untitled, 1997
Ceramic
3 x 16 3/4 inches
Collection of the artist

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